

H. CON. RESOLUTION ON UGANDA

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 24, 1998

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today, I join my colleague Mr. Payne in submitting this resolution condemning the forced abduction of children by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda. The LRA, a bizarre Christian group supported by the fundamentalist Islamic government in Sudan, has kidnapped some 10,000 Ugandan children and forced them to fight as insurgents. Some of these children are as young as eight years old.

Captive children raid and loot villages and serve in the front lines against the Ugandan army. They are also forced to help kill other abducted children who try to escape. Young teenage girls suffer the additional horror of serving as "wives" to ranking rebel soldiers. If they resist, they are beaten, sometimes severely. Girls may be given to several men in the course of a year.

I am heartened that the children's plight is getting more international attention. In March, the U.N. Commission on Human Rights condemned "in the strongest terms" the abduction of children in Northern Uganda, and the First Lady addressed the issue in a speech while visiting the country. Much more needs to be done, however.

This resolution condemns the abduction of children by the LRA in northern Uganda and calls for the immediate release of all LRA child captives. It urges the recently-appointed U.N. Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict to aggressively address the situation, and encourages the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child to investigate. The resolution also calls on the Al-Bashir Government in Sudan to stop supporting the LRA and asks President Clinton to provide more support to U.N. agencies and non-governmental organizations working to rehabilitate and reintegrate former child soldiers into society.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this important legislation and I urge all my colleagues to support it. Let us help end the nightmare for children in Northern Uganda.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 24, 1998

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 20, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall votes 297–306. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall votes 297, 298, 299, 300 and 301, "no" on rollcall vote 302, "yes" on rollcall votes 303, 304, and 305, and "no" on rollcall vote 306. Please place this in the appropriate place in the RECORD.

MR. STARR: WAIVE REPORTERS' PRIVILEGE OF SILENCE AND ALLOW THEM TO TELL WHAT THEY KNOW

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 24, 1998

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr is now the subject of multiple investigations of whether he and his staff illegally leaked confidential information to the media. Those investigations include a contempt hearing to be held by Chief Judge Norma Holloway Johnson of the federal court in Washington, and inquiries by the Office of Professional Responsibility of the Justice Department, and the D.C. Bar Counsel. In addition, the Independent Counsel is supposed to be investigating himself.

Mr. Starr has already admitted that he and his chief deputy, Mr. Jackie Bennett, routinely talk to the media on an off-the-record basis regarding their investigation of the President. The Independent Counsel claims, however, that his discussions were legal because the rule of grand jury secrecy does not reach information until it is presented to a grand jury. That argument, in my view, is incorrect.

An important question in these leak investigations will be exactly what was said during meetings between the prosecutors and reporters. In order to have a full and complete record of what went on during those sessions, the Independent Counsel should publicly release the reporters from their vows of silence. After all, is it fair for the Independent Counsel to share confidential information with reporters, and then force them to cover-up possible misdeeds?

I fully respect a reporter's First Amendment right not to reveal a source. But the Independent Counsel can relieve the reporters from having to make a difficult decision to stand mute. Given the significance of issues involving the investigation of the President, Mr. Starr should allow the court and public to know what his media contacts have to say on this subject.

On more than one occasion, the Independent Counsel has called on the President to urge others to waive privileges and testify. The first was when he wrote to the White House Counsel, Mr. Ruff, asking that the President tell Susan McDougal to waive her Fifth Amendment rights and testify before the White water grand jury. Mr. Starr did that even though Ms. McDougal had her own lawyer to advise her, and publicly said that she would not listen to what the President said. In addition, the spokesman for the Independent Counsel, Mr. Bakaly, criticized the President for refusing to urge Ms. McDougal to give up her rights.

A second instance involved the Secret Service. In April of this year, after the Secret Service argued that its agents could not be compelled to testify about the President, Mr. Starr requested that the President waive any Secret Service privilege and order the agents to appear before the grand jury. Mr. Starr made that request even though the privilege was asserted by the Secret Service and not the President, and the Secret Service's director, Mr. Merletti, considered the matter to be one of great national significance.

The President was right when he refused the Independent Counsel's ill-considered requests. But I cannot see any public interest in Mr. Starr's refusal to waive the privilege that requires his media contacts to remain silent in the face of these leak investigations. The Independent Counsel has made clear that he views the invocation of privileges as a roadblock to the truth. How, in good conscience, can he take a different position simply because he has now become the focus of the investigation?

STATEMENT FROM SOME VERMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 24, 1998

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to have printed in the RECORD this statement by a high school student from my home state of Vermont, who was speaking at my recent town meeting on issues facing young people today. I insert this statement in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as I believe that the views of this young person will benefit my colleagues:

STATEMENT BY ERIK KENYON, MEGAN WILLEY, KELLY COOK AND JUSTIN STURGES REGARDING GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE

ERIK KENYON: Thank you.

United Nations here from the Bellows Free Academy Gay-Straight Alliance. You have already heard about gay-straight alliances, so we are just going to tell you a bit today about the way our school works.

Like most places in Vermont, St. Albans—over that way—is fairly isolated. For the first two years of high school, I just didn't date anyone. It was something I had no real urge to do. I never thought, well, maybe I'm gay, because the word never came up at all, until I went off to the Vermont Youth Orchestra—which is really cool—I have to get a plug in here; we have a concert tomorrow by the way—which is where I met my first gay person, and that United Nations. "That makes sense. Why didn't I think of that?" This is how isolated St. Albans really is. And St. Albans is actually a big progressive for the State of Vermont, if that tells you anything.

And so, at the beginning of the year, some students got together, and we wanted to start something, and the gay-straight alliance is what we decided on, and here is Justin to tell you about that.

JUSTIN STURGES: When we began, it was a new thing, you know, no one had even thought about GSAs, and so we were met with a certain degree of resistance. There is a story that goes along with this. When we first went into our headmaster's office, there were three of us, Erik, myself and another guy, who couldn't be here. He asked us, Well, how many of you people are there? And that, right there, set the mood. He has gotten better, and I think that we are the reason, to an extent. It was this sense of newness, this sense of an uncharted area that no one had been to yet, and we broke that.

And we have been met with certain degree of resistance from several people, from people in the school, from outside influences, from adults, from the teachers.

Here is Kelly. Kelly is going to talk about an experience of her's.

KELLY COOK: Hi.

Yeah. I joined GSA about three weeks ago, I think. One time, I was walking up to a coffee house which we put on quite often. And a